

## EXAMPLES OF MAIL ORDER SCAMS

After spending the last few months investigating certain types of mail order businesses, it was obvious that some of them were border line questionable, if not a verifiable scam.

EXAMPLE 1 Collect names for us. We pay \$20 each. Guaranteed! The truth is, this company WILL pay you \$20 for each name you collect for them. What they DON'T tell you is that each person has to spend \$100 or more by placing an order before you get your \$20.

The customer is led to believe that all they have to do is get out their phone books and start sending the company names and addresses. In return, the company will send them \$20 for each name and address they send them. When they send away for the details they discover the scam and think everybody in mail order is operating this way. Result: Mail order is labeled as a scam and illegal business activity.

EXAMPLE 2 "How to get 100,000 people to send you \$10 each. Send \$1 to..." This is cute advertising, but you have to put a legitimate product behind claims like this. One of the materials I found was a book with this title. And you get the book for sending \$1 to the publisher. Some so-called seasoned pros will abruptly judge this as a scam. To some extent, these people are not pros. They're just jaded. For mail order neophytes, this is very intriguing. Besides, it only costs \$1 to find out. What the beginner finds out is that they are expected to run the same ad in newspapers and tabloids. Other people will send \$1 for information and their mailbox is "supposedly" flooded with \$1 bills. This ad is NOT illegal. It asks you to send \$1 for information and you DO get the information.

These types of ads are all a bunch of paper-passing \_ and I classify them under the heading of a "Legitimate Scam." You can't complain that your order was not filled. You can't complain the idea is not possible. You can't complain the ad promised something it didn't deliver.

Likewise, do not confuse scam-sounding ads with legitimate lead-generation ads." A mail order buddie of mine will run an ad that states: "Want to make a lot of money? Call (his telephone number.)" This is NOT necessarily a scam or rip-off. Since there is no cost involved \_ it might be worth your time and effort to call the number and see what this dealer has to offer.

Also, some dealers run ads that don't tell you what the product

is because they have an entire package of information they want to send you. It would be too costly to advertise the complete information in a small 1" or 2" ad, so they run "Lead-Generating Ads" to bring them inquiries. This is also not illegal and is common business practice. You'll also find that real "Lead-Generating Ads" DON'T ask you for a lot of money up front. They only tell you enough about the product to entice you to send in a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) or \$1 for more information. They are unlike the "Example 2" at the left that basically tell you the scam before you order it! (It may take a little time for you to make the distinction between these fine lines.)

Many people overlook the power of the printed word. Instead of complaining, people should be writing their mail order publishers when they are ripped-off, providing them with documentation and a summary of these mail order scams.

Use wisdom. Get your facts straight. Have documentation to back-up your findings and submit them! Wouldn't it be great if everybody in the world were honest? What a wonderful world this would be!